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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE INFORMATION BARBER POLE: INTEGRATING
WHITE INFORMATION AND RED INTELLIGENCE IN
EMERGING CONFLICTS**

by

John M. R. Wilcox

December 2013

Thesis Advisor:
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INFORMATION AND RED INTELLIGENCE IN EMERGING CONFLICTS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Militaries operate increasingly in social terrain and must focus on civilian populations as much they do the belligerents that take refuge among them. Current intelligence and planning doctrine fails to meet the needs of the emerging information environments. “Secret” intelligence information and “open source” information must find a means of merging to generate a holistic view of the environment. The failure of the existing system leads to shortcomings in strategy development and operational design, which in turn yields imprecise applications of military power.

To overcome this gap in structure and doctrine, this thesis explores a new methodology that merges information and intelligence where appropriate and develops a common understanding across levels of command. The ‘Barber Pole’ process, as it is termed here, maximizes the use of existing structures, and capitalizes on resident professional military skills.

The Barber Pole is a three-step process that flattens intelligence and information systems for the purposes of ensuring a common and shared understanding of the operating environment. These phases include the collection of information and provision of command guidance, the coordination and interpretation of collected data, and finally the production of plans tailored to the target population.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	DEFINING THE INFORMATIONAL PROBLEM.....	1
	1. The Current Information Function.....	2
	2. The Synchronization Challenge.....	6
II.	THE BARBER POLE PROCESS: SYNCHRONIZING RED INTELLIGENCE AND WHITE INFORMATION	13
A.	INTRODUCTION.....	13
B.	UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCE THROUGH INFORMATION: A THREE-PHASE PROCESS:	15
	1. Phase One: Guidance and Collection.....	16
	2. Phase Two: Coordination and Interpretation.....	19
	3. Phase Three: Production.....	25
	4. Implications	29
III.	THE CASE OF OEF-PHILIPPINES.....	31
A.	OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES BACKGROUND	33
B.	VARYING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL	37
	1. PRE-TEST: Before the Synchronization of Information and Intel.....	37
	2. POST-TEST: After the Incorporation of a Broader Informational Environment.....	39
	3. The Impact of Synchronized Information at the Strategic Level..	43
IV.	CONCLUSION	49
A.	USING THE BARBER POLE TO INFLUENCE POLICY	50
B.	RESTRUCTURING ORGANIZATIONS FOR OPTIMAL EFFECT.....	51
C.	CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL INCENTIVES TO SUPPORT THE BARBER POLE	52
D.	TAILORING THE BARBER POLE FOR MISSION SPECIFIC INFORMATION.....	53
E.	THE FUTURE OF THE BARBER POLE AND CONFLICT	54
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	57
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	61

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Depiction of the Barber Pole process.....	16
Figure 2.	Graphical depiction of red and white information streams intersecting at critical points in the collection process.	24

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ARSOF	United States Army Special Operations Forces
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
CA	Civil Affairs
CI	counter intelligence
CMAG	Civil Military Assistance Group
CMO	Civil Military Operations
COIN	counter insurgency
CONUS	Continental United States
DOD	Department of Defense
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
HVT	high value target
IGO	intergovernmental organization
IO	information operations
JIPOE	joint intelligence preparation of the environment
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines
MOE	measures of effectiveness
NGO	non-governmental organization
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines
OPE	Operational Preparation of the Environment
OSINT	open source intelligence
PNP SAF	Philippines National Police Special Action Force
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SIGINT	signal intelligence
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
USG	United States Government
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement

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I. INTRODUCTION

“This is not to say that we cannot describe a flower without, every time, having to recite or construct a philosophy of Nature or a theory of biology. It is not to say that we must always study the total macrostructure of a society. But it is to say that the analysis of situations has always to be informed by an awareness of the world within which situations and encounters are located, and more than that, requires an explicit conceptualization of what that world looks like.”

—Peter Worsley-sociologist and theoretical ethnographer¹

A. DEFINING THE INFORMATIONAL PROBLEM

The Department of Defense (DoD) faces an emerging battlefield, not one with front lines over which opposing forces face off. Instead, this battlefield is the increasingly contentious terrain of civilian populations and their myriad complexities. One could argue some of the gravest American military inefficiencies that have plagued the conflicts of the last decade have been less about ideology than they have been about the United States military’s slow but emerging comprehension of this new battlefield. Whether within the context of counterinsurgency operations (COIN), or one of several other similar titles, the fundamental focus of these doctrines has been the comprehension of the human element, and how to use military means as influence on the population to achieve American strategic goals. Recent history continues to indicate that conflicts will continue to be civil actions with kinetic application rather than the inverse that was historically the case.

To meet the needs of changing conflict, a pursuit of understanding people and mass publics has ensued. To date, the efficacy of emerging tools used to map and measure a population and their potential response to stimuli has fallen short, as these tools often result in disjointed and inconsistent measurements and estimates. In some cases, the problem has been one of organizational failure in that units that contribute to

¹ P. M. Worsley, “The State of Theory and the Status of Theory,” *Sociology* 8, no. 1 (1974), 117.

the overall understanding of a target population will not, or, by directive, cannot share critical information with one another. Other cases have emerged due to incompatible data systems, collection techniques, and training. Indeed, one individual's view of a population might differ greatly from another's simply because of background or personal biases. With all of these challenges, understanding a population can be as difficult as taking a measurement using a kaleidoscope with constantly shifting images and impossible to interpret shapes. Previous attempts to bridge the capability gap were "hastily concocted products that were often superficial and subsequently shown to have little practical value for conducting counterinsurgency interventions."² The task of deciphering such a challenging environment is considerable, yet the skills and supporting technology already exist to generate a concept more suitable to emerging conflict environments.

From a strategic standpoint, nations must weigh their interests and the resources required on the degree of import each presents. This is reinforced by Morgenthau's belief that nations should be willing to compromise on secondary issues while defining the vital objectives of foreign power in concise terms with ample means to achieve the national objective.³ Information resources should be committed in a similar fashion. The criticality of informed strategy begins in its design; poorly informed strategy will obligate resources where they might not be best employed. At the tactical level, failure to collect and develop information that is accurate and in support of the overall strategy will yield inaccurate operational understanding.

1. The Current Information Function

This thesis proceeds from the assumption that kinetic and non-kinetic operations must be viewed as part of a larger spectrum of influence tools available to commanders at all levels. This is in keeping with LTG Cleveland's model of US Special Operations forces as an influencing agent within the "human domain." as it is termed in ARSOF

² David J. Katz, "Fitting Intelligence to the Fight: Lesson from Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, July 20, 2013, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/fitting-intelligence-to-the-fight-lessons-from-afghanistan>.

³ Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Future of Diplomacy," in *Strategy and Force Planning*, ed. Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thomson (Newport: Naval War College, 1997), 267–277.

2022.⁴⁵ Within this approach is the understanding that one must be able to accurately assess and even anticipate the degree and type of influence a given military activity will have on a population. Militaries operate in social terrain, and this has only become increasingly evident in conflicts over the past 30 years. Military objectives and their effect on the population are inextricably linked. There is considerable study into the shortcomings of American military strategy, but very rarely with an eye towards the intelligence and the information construct from which it was generated. The relevant literature assembled here provides only a few examples of academic study that is relevant to this thesis, but falls short of the recommendations presented in later chapters.

One of the most influential documents on intelligence reform in recent years has been LTG Flynn's "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan."⁶ In his report, LTG Flynn makes several recommendations for the reform of intelligence structure, doctrine, and procedure. While not all of his recommendations are compatible with the conclusions made in this thesis, Flynn's design for less regimented, loosely structured intelligence and information fits the expected demands of emerging conflict environments. Robust streams of information encourage and generate a broader understanding of the operating environment. This gives a commander and planners a better idea of the potential influence a given operation has within a population. Unlike Flynn however, this thesis attempts to find solutions within existing command structures training apparatuses rather than developing a completely new organization or personnel requirement.⁷

⁴ Charles Cleveland, Brief, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 5 September 2013.

⁵ United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication, "ARSOE 2022," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3-31.

⁶ Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul Batchelor. *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 1-28.

⁷ For similar criticisms of the Flynn Report, see Leo J. Blanken, and Justin Overbaugh. "Looking for Intel?... Or Looking for Answers? Reforming Military Intelligence for a Counterinsurgency Environment." *Intelligence and National Security* 27 no.4 (2012): 559-575.

Intelligence can be a subfield of civil-military relations (CMR), but goes beyond CMR in its application and larger purpose. This idea stems from *Reforming Intelligence* in which the authors explore how to improve intelligence effectiveness, oversight, and efficiency through the same parameters that govern CMR.⁸ This concept highlights the need for more integrated thinking in intelligence and a need for a larger sphere of information in overall information picture. Information and intelligence are linked intrinsically and should not be viewed as separate yet equal means of understanding a population. Bruneau and Boraz' views on trust between governments and their professional intelligence force are particularly appropriate when viewed in a perspective of information collection and how the responsible parties interact.⁹

Influence as a measure of full-spectrum operations requires a greater understanding of military operations as more than just force on force battlefield maneuvers, referred to as "kinetic operations." Because populations are multifaceted and dynamic the military approach to influence those populations must be equally nuanced. To build on the idea of kinetic operations as just one part of the greater military skill set, several references are helpful. Komer highlights a successful use of accurate and complete comprehension of a population and the respective manipulation to gain control of the population and defeat the insurgency in Malaya.¹⁰ Gray gives a broad overview of successful SOF operations and the aspects make those missions successful, among them is a comprehensive understanding of how a population perceives and responds to its relationship with U.S. SOF personnel.¹¹ These empirical works demonstrate that an implicit understanding of the linked nature of intelligence and information has existed for

⁸ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Steven C. Boraz. *Reforming Intelligence: Obstacles to Democratic Control and Effectiveness* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007).

⁹ Thomas C. Bruneau, and Steven C. Boraz. *Reforming Intelligence: Obstacles to Democratic Control and Effectiveness* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 338–339.

¹⁰ Robert Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972).

¹¹ Colin S. Gray. "Handfuls of Heroes on Desperate Ventures: When do Special Operations Succeed?" *Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College* (Spring 1999), 2–24.

some time, but the doctrine and military infrastructure hasn't existed to make capitalize on that understanding.

One of the fundamental concepts of this thesis is that of a population that is networked and an insurgency that is inextricably linked to that population. McCormick's Mystic Diamond Model depicts the nature of the relationship between a population, an insurgent force and a counter-insurgent force.¹² This concept substantiates the redefinition of how operations affect a population and why the relationship between these forces is fluid; they require a greater understanding than the effects generated from kinetic activity. Simmel, a foundational intellectual character in the study of social networks, believed that understanding the nature of the relationships between individuals provided better insight to a society or population better than a study of the individuals contained therein.¹³ Thus, comprehension of a population cannot rely on a singular means of interpreting a populations reaction to given stimuli, nor should that comprehension attempt to explain every action taken within a population. A military organization must rely on a persistent cycle of targeted intelligence information development to decipher and even predict the most consequential actions of a population.

Underlying the understanding of how populations operate is the commensurate development of strategies that potentially address the emerging conflict zones, and the decentralized elements American forces are commonly asked to confront. Here, Arquilla and Ronfeldt's "netwar" concept is extremely useful, in that their view of an enemy with decentralized execution must be met with a strategy that is equally decentralized in construct and implementation.¹⁴ This matches the horizontally distributed intelligence and information framework recommended here, and ultimately reflects the idea that "stove-piped" intelligence and information systems are incapable of challenging a decentralized enemy. The population focus is also reflected in the ARSOF 2022, which is

¹² As illustrated in Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," *Special Warfare* 24, no. 3 (September 2005).

¹³ Nicholas J. Spykman. *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964).

¹⁴ John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt. *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996).

a centerpiece of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's vision for the future.¹⁵ ARSOF 2022 includes a number of population and relationship-based initiatives.

2. The Synchronization Challenge

To optimize information collection, we must first look at the existing information and intelligence collection modules. First, we must classify information into the two commonly accepted nodes of unclassified or open-source data ("white" information) and intelligence ("red" information or intelligence). White information has ambiguous collection methodology and equally ambiguous requirements as compared to red intelligence, which already has relatively robust and well-established collection, processing, and dissemination mechanisms. Synchronizing these systems requires an innovative approach to collaborative staffing processes and information sharing that must go beyond existing DoD structures.¹⁶

In his 2010 report,¹⁷ Major General Flynn issues a comprehensive assessment of intelligence as it had been used during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. While many of his recommendations are hotly debated in academic and military circles, his overall assessment that "the vast intelligence apparatus is unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which U.S. and allied forces operate and the people they seek to persuade" continues to be a valid critique.¹⁸ The trend for the initial stages of

15 United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication, "ARSOF 2022," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3–31.

16 It is useful at this point to define some concepts and organizational terms that feature prominently in this study. Measures of Performance (MOP) are specific metrics associated with an activity. Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) refer to specific metrics or measurements used to judge the efficacy of an operation or activity. MOE and MOP are often incorrectly used interchangeably when, in fact, they are quite different. Intelligence or "intel" for the purposes of this thesis is meant to indicate specific information collected in the process of developing one of the recognized intelligence functions which include (but are not limited to) human intelligence (HUMINT), open source intelligence (OSINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT). White information and intelligence is derived from a broader swath of information, and can include open source information, civil information, and information openly provided by other government and non-government sources.

17 Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 1–28.

18 Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 3.

the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq was to focus on red intelligence primarily because the command structures and doctrine lend themselves to continuing the status quo inherent to the kinetic focus of the military writ large. Additionally, although “winning hearts and minds” was hardly a new concept, there has never been a military-ordained information structure that provides understanding of or explains the interpretation of data outside of traditional structures. Prodigious efforts have been made to retool the intelligence process or infuse the process with civil information, but only as an supplemental effort to the red targeting methodology. Red intelligence alone is incapable of overcoming its fundamental shortcoming because it “fails to provide commanders and policymakers with an effective understanding of complex ...environments.”¹⁹ The existing targeting methodology falls well short of the demands of the emerging operating environment in that it is myopic in its information draw. Emerging conflicts of the last 30 years indicate this methodology isn’t enough to win the kinetic fights.

The challenge inherent in approaching this problem is how to synchronize the two critical information streams without adding to the bureaucracies that already exist to support them. To do so, structural and training shortcomings must be addressed to ensure the white intelligence is as well developed as the red intelligence, and that there are adequate means of integration between the two. These adjustments need to be made with little or no addition of personnel, but may include a slight deviation in skills and utilization at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. These variations may potentially be modified according to mission or region as well. It should also be noted that a fundamental organizational change must include redefining the professional rewards and incentives for actors in both the red and white realms. As Connable notes that “analysts working on enemy (red-force) activities appear to have many informal career advantages over those who focus on what many consider to be fuzzy or less relevant (white, or population-centric) sociocultural issues.”²⁰ The adjustments to

¹⁹ Ben Connable, *Military Intelligence Fusion for Complex Operations: A New Paradigm* (Santa Monica: RAND 2012), 5.

²⁰ Ibid., 2

structure and roles must optimize the synthesis of information in such a way that this data will fit cultural, geographical, and other critical nuances of the region.

To draw on an illustrative example from World War II, David Kennedy was able to carry out an extended insurgent-style campaign against the Japanese in part because he held a keen understanding of the informational environment and prevented the Japanese from accessing that same information. Through a combination of efforts spanning the spectrum of operations, he gained the support of the native Segi residents.²¹ In return, the Segi provided him with overt support, information, and intelligence. Kennedy and his work with the Segi were just part of a larger campaign in 1942 to take back the South Pacific, but it remains an important lesson. At a time where the U.S. was still coping with the Pearl Harbor attack, Kennedy's ability to use information merged with intelligence (without the benefit of modern technology and convenience) gave him a clear picture of the operating environment. This in turn allowed Kennedy to harass the Japanese and gain favor with the local inhabitants for an extended period of time.

This thesis will focus on the informational environment at large, specifically the often-underused "white" information to generate a more complete understanding of a population, as well as clarify the divide between measures of effectiveness and strategic goals. Achieving tactical and operational successes may not be sufficient to meet the strategic goals; while this has been noted many times, the causes of the failure of the post-conflict Iraq invasion are routinely misdiagnosed. The Bush administration and military planners fell short because they lacked the clear understanding of the environment that should have come from combined information systems that were available to them. These processes are reliant on red intelligence systems and, in fact, are doctrinally required to have intelligence planners involved in the process. This shortcoming calls for a means of targeting and assessing operations that go beyond kinetic operations.

21 Walter Lord. "A Very Private War," in *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times*, ed. John Arquilla (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), 256–273.

Taking a cue from anthropological and sociological experts, information represents a broader and more robust understanding of the operational environment, and requires sufficient systems to support that broader understanding. As the noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz opined “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, culture is one interpretation of those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.” German political scientist Max Weber similarly saw cultures in varying manifestations of “webs of significance”²² in which one conceivably could examine these webs and then understand the aspects them that would then motivate actors. In order to do so, one must have as complete and broad an understanding of information as time and resources allow.

One line of effort in the Vietnam War provides another illustrative example. The CORDS program used the application of information and influence to improve governance in outlying villages, manipulate public opinion of American and South Vietnamese forces, and to collect information on the local community. Krepelevich discussed the value of CORDS: “to the extent that army efforts at pacification, intelligence gathering, destruction of the insurgent infrastructure, and employment strike teams reflect counterinsurgency doctrine, they did so primarily because of the efforts of small sub organizations, such as the special forces and the civilian-run CORDS, that were out of the services’ mainstream.”²³ Even so, the program was treated with varying degrees of import. According to Krepelevich, as intelligence efforts focused more on conventional, broader intelligence gathering for tactical purposes “...the emphasis on producing reliable intelligence for use by conventional units led to the decline of ‘local’ intelligence.”²⁴ This capability gap is where civil information collection and management meets intelligence.

²² As quoted in: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books 1973), 5.

²³ Andrew F. Krepelevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 232.

²⁴ Andrew F. Krepelevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 230.

Impressive advances in computing and data storage alone cannot solve these problems. The systems and models designed to map the human domain has grown immensely, along with them, the need for better integration and management of those systems. The critical point is where civil information and intelligence systems meet in the operational preparation of the environment (OPE) and the joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment (JIPOE). The human domain must be recognized as critical to decision making, it forms the fundamental understanding on which command decisions are developed. Failing to rectify this shortcoming is especially egregious given the extent to which information networks will predict coming conflicts. Technical advances do not alleviate the need for thoughtful guidance, management, and integration of efforts.

Information demand on the modern battlefield goes well beyond traditional intelligence and attempts to define the very nature of a population, and to an extent, predict their behavior to military stimuli. However, current practice is has produced questionable results, and in some cases acted against the best interests of the United States. This thesis will attempt to answer two important questions:

- How should intelligence and information systems reinforce one another to better define the operating environment?
- Are the information and intelligence collection processes as currently written in doctrine sufficient to accurately depict and assist in the achievement of strategic goals?

Previous studies have not focused on the gap between how a military conducts the business of intelligence, and how we determine the effect it has on a population. For centuries, military intelligence methodology has morphed and adjusted to the needs of the conflict at the time. Population engagement is not necessarily a new concept, but efforts to understand populations have typically been generated via intelligence structures. Military commanders have an incomplete understanding of their area of operations, create guidance based on that faulty understanding, and then misconstrue the reasons for success or failure afterward. The methodology recommended here is designed to address

those comprehension gaps, and give a commander and their staff a more accurate understanding of how their operations potentially influence the human domain. This capability alone leads to clearer guidance, better strategy, more efficient use of resources and skills, and prevents haphazard use of military capability.²⁵

To meet the needs of emerging conflicts, this thesis discusses the reformatting of existing military staff structures to effect conceptualizing the entire spectrum of information and intelligence, termed here as the “Barber Pole.” Information and its enmeshing within the core operating structures of the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines depicts the utility of this new information design methodology. The information structure within JSOTF-P led to significant successes and advancements at all levels of operations. Finally, the Barber Pole potentially affects the range of military operations world-wide, SOF specific activity is enhanced in a collaborative informational environment. The conclusion discusses just a sampling of the potential utility of combined information structures, analytical tools, and implementation methodologies.

²⁵ John J. Nelson, Sandra L. Newett, Johnathan T. Dworken, Katherine A. W. McGrady, and Kenneth LaMon, *Measures of Effectiveness for Humanitarian Assistance Operations* (Alexandria: Center For Naval Analyses, 1996) looks at an early genesis of HA MOE and how those MOE might feed a greater information structure. Several critiques to the shortcomings information and intelligence compliment this effort as well, Leo Blanken, “Performance Measurement in Military Operations: Information versus Incentives” (Accepted for publication in *Defence and Peace Economics*, also found at: http://faculty.nps.edu/ljblanke/docs/PMO_11_12_12.pdf), Gregory Daddis “No sure Victory: Measuring US Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Ethan B. Kapstein “Military Metrics: How Do We Know When We’re Winning (or Losing) a War?” *Small Wars Journal* July 6, 2011. help define MOE and its accurate representation.

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II. THE BARBER POLE PROCESS: SYNCHRONIZING RED INTELLIGENCE AND WHITE INFORMATION

A. INTRODUCTION

“Intelligence” and “information” are often treated as separate phenomena in their collection and application; this occurs partially because the personnel responsible for each task are utterly disconnected from one another. They do not work in tandem, nor are they directed to by any doctrine or methodology. Understanding the operational environment demands that all information be integrated and understood to inform command decisions at all levels. Failure to do so yields inaccurate understanding of the operating environment and contributes to the use of improper assessments. This chapter will review existing information collection and development processes while exposing the weaknesses in the current doctrine and practice. It offers some very simple changes that would improve the comprehension of the operating environment, and increase efficiency in resource-constrained operating environments.

Intelligence is gathered almost solely from specified collectors; this is due to legal restrictions, and a resistance to opening the aperture of intelligence to include information’s impact on the operational environment. Open source intelligence (OSINT) is designed to capture information that hasn’t traditionally been considered part of the overall intelligence estimate. White information comes from much broader sources, and can include anything from news articles and “Twitter feeds” to civil data collected as part of a civil affairs (CA) or civil-military operations (CMO) campaign. These are people-centric resources and require significant personnel, time and resources to ingest, decipher, and process. The development of these skills denotes acknowledgment of the overlap of intelligence skills and information collection, which also links directly to the ARSOF 2022 priorities “Invest in Human Capital” and “Optimize SOF/CF/JIIM Interdependence.”²⁶ Because SOF tend to operate in these ambiguous environments,

²⁶ United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School’s Office of Strategic Communication, “ARSOF 2022,” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3–31.

they must meet the informational challenges of conflicts which are likely to become less clearly defined, more population focused, and hard to measure. The 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) under the instruction of USASOC and SOCOM has formulated a civil military assistance group (CMAG) as a facilitation measure of information sharing and interagency collaboration. The CMAG represents only one part of the overall need though, there is far greater organizational interoperability necessary to facilitate operations. Units themselves must determine the correct permutation of people and skills.

In short, although red and white information have legal and organizational restrictions that prevent them from integrating completely, the poorly-defined boundaries between intelligence and information are the weakest point in the planning process. Rather than clarifying doctrine and building steps into the process to meet informational needs of a command, the white and red data are commonly viewed as separate and unrelated, existing command structures and processes only serve to reinforce this attitude. As the UK Joint doctrine notes, this is a misinterpretation of human domain, which they define as “the totality of the human sphere of activity or knowledge” and focuses on humans and their interaction with their environment.²⁷ Therefore, we must conclude that both red and white data are indeed part of the larger pool of information that defines that environment and are linked as such.

The solution is straightforward: use the resources and skills in already existing but latent forms in a new and dynamic way that unifies the information and intelligence streams as much as possible while giving commanders and their planners as robust and broad an understanding of the operating environment as possible. The “Barber Pole” is collaborative, scalable, and would help solve the critical disconnect between how tactical units measure their performance and the strategic guidance under which they operate. This in effect drives a new targeting methodology that can allow for “influence

²⁷ Great Britain, *Intelligence and Understanding*. (London: Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Ministry of Defence, 2010), 3–5.

targeting,” wherein “influence” includes the full spectrum of kinetic and non-kinetic operations and their respective impact on a population.

When describing the informational environment, I will examine how information is collected and how it is information is collected and then processed using distinct and separate means. In doing so, the methodology behind both the inputs and subsequent outputs, and specifically how that information influences decision-making and assessments of operations across the spectrum. Clausewitz stated: “Knowledge must be so absorbed into the military mind that it almost ceases to exist in a separate, objective way.”²⁸ The breadth of data available to a commander makes knowing everything impossible, but Clausewitz’s advice to commanders to immerse themselves in the full spectrum of knowledge as deeply as possible is still relevant. As warfare and conflict have morphed to their current permutation, the gaps in information and intelligence (or in Clausewitz’ terminology, knowledge) processing have grown. The failure to synchronize information and intelligence across all levels and phases of operations, undercuts military operations before they begin.

B. UNDERSTANDING INFLUENCE THROUGH INFORMATION: A THREE-PHASE PROCESS:

To understand a population in terms of influence, a three-step process is necessary. First, in the “Guidance and Collection Phase” a commander issues guidance in accordance with influence targeting strategy. During the “Coordination and Interpretation Phase” information and intelligence are collected, analyzed, and merged in common conceptual framework of influencing the population through a spectrum of activities. This is followed by the final phase, the “Production Phase” where coherent and unified deliverables are provided to command, and guidance and refinement is sought as the cycle repeats. The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I lay out each of these three phases in turn, describe each in detail with an explanation as to how each is an improvement over existing methodology, and then conclude with some empirical implications.

²⁸ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard, Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 147.

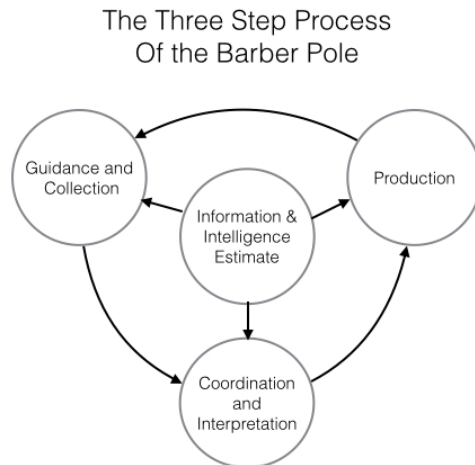


Figure 1. Depiction of the Barber Pole process

1. Phase One: Guidance and Collection

The first phase has two distinct purposes, elicit guidance from higher command, and initiate the collection of information to effect strategic planning and subordinate operations. The core of the entire information process should be derived from or rooted in an existing estimate that is controlled and updated by appropriate DoD, USG, and interagency participation. The Barber Pole incorporates their feedback, but also keeps contributors tied to their estimate via their direct participation thus providing incentive. To meet this need, ARSOF 2022 seeks to “Operationalize the CONUS Base”²⁹ by leveraging relationships and expertise within the United States, maximizing the shared understanding of a population. From a military standpoint, commanders should take a more participative role in the estimate process, making the clarity and accuracy of the estimate as it filters upward critical. Strategy needs to be tied to accurate information in order to exist in the realm of the possible and connected to real achievable objectives that are rooted in the information estimate.

Information collection already has some underlying principles that are helpful in the first phase, but the core of the influence estimate recommended here ties together

²⁹ United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School’s Office of Strategic Communication, “ARSOF 2022,” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3–31.

these processes into a comprehensive influence estimate. Although not always possible to include all agencies or potential contributors, the interagency plays a critical role in the development of this estimate. Tying together systems and doctrine designed to understand enemy motivations and predict behavior now expands that understanding from a linear, event-focused prediction to a comprehensive one. The emergence of networks and civilian focused warfare has muddled what were more clearly defined lines of battle.³⁰ The Barber Pole begins at the inception of national and regional strategy, wherein commanders and politicians provide their overall vision for a region. The existing practice of implementing strategy encounters its first capability gap, in that strategists rarely demonstrate that they have the granularity of information to understand the feasibility of their strategy and the true impact those strategies will have at the operational or tactical level.

Planners over the past decade have had to contend with enemies that operate in loosely affiliated networks with weakly defined chains of command³¹ and have had to use information systems inadequate to the task to understand and confront them. This is not to impugn the strategist and their methodology but neither does it absolve them from breaking the existing paradigm, which seems to follow a pattern of broad overarching guidance with little regard for its achievability. Current doctrine has repeatedly proven successful in individual and in some cases group targeting, especially in the realm of kinetic operations. Where it struggles is to understand how these events impact the population and influence that population as a culture. At a strategic level, culture means understanding “history, values, ideology, politics, religion, and other cultural dimensions and assess their potential effect on policy and strategy.”³² Influencing individuals and social segments is key, but existing structures now appear to depend on personalities or high value targets (HVT), to implement succinct influencing operations. This results in open-ended strategies that shift over time and result in incongruent operational and

30 John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), 4.

31 John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), 5.

32 Jiyul Kim, *Cultural dimensions of strategy and policy*. (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College 2009), 2.

tactical operations to support them. An example here is the often-lamented focus during Vietnam on body counts over more successful population-focused approaches. Krepinevich writes on the intractability of higher commands to the requests of subordinates to increase focus on partnered and village-based forces, “unfortunately, paramilitary forces did not fit the Army’s perception of the war and its propensity for seeking solutions through conventional operations.”³³

An integrated command presence, while difficult to implement, will help clarify one of the most problematic portions of the planning: defining the desired end state. Targeting processes tend to focus on enemy metrics and objectives because they are set up to ingest and interpret tangible numbers and ratios. This seems almost diametrically opposed to the nature of white intelligence and information, which tends to focus on less tangible concepts or factors that are more difficult to measure. Still, the overall goal of these combined operations is that of influence, either through negative or positive feedback. Accepting this, the spectrum of operations ceases to be one of a military focus, but rather the comprehension of the environment itself, which lends itself to a clearly defined desired result. Here, the criticality of complete comprehension of the operating environment is apparent, failure to understand how an operation influences a population—either for or against U.S. interests—means that said operation is conducted with little understanding of its ramifications thereby rendering undue risk to the mission.

Solving the strategy and guidance gap begins with commanders acting from an informed position. Current planning doctrine relies on a commander’s staff to provide situational awareness, which forms the foundation for command decisions. In its current permutation, red intelligence collection does provide some overriding principles that can be applied to planning and strategy design. Actions taken at the strategic and tactical levels cannot be viewed as separate complementing activity. Instead, following Gray’s advice, tactics are the implementation measures of strategy.³⁴ This also mandates that the

³³ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 221.

³⁴ Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

information that drives all levels of operation be similarly synchronized, in that all levels and disciplines of warfighting “can be regarded more as distinctive points of view of a single complex phenomenon than discrete subjects.”³⁵ Rather than attempting to understand the operating environment at distinct levels or according to separate military disciplines, this complex web of information must be understood as a whole. This also means that conceptualizing the information must be done using a unified and interdisciplinary method. Information gathering at the strategic level then becomes a tool for subordinate levels weighing the critical elements of time, criticality, relevance and accuracy in the direction of its collection.³⁶ In this way, strategic information is not a directive as much as it is a collection of critical tactical information and combined expertise designed for command comprehension. The advantage to this approach is that tactical operations would understand with better fidelity where they fit in the greater spectrum of activity and can tailor information to meet the needs of operational and strategic commanders as a result.

2. Phase Two: Coordination and Interpretation

The most important step in this process, coordination and interpretation must balance and integrate the considerable information needs in order “to develop a broad vision of information warfare.”³⁷ Coordination and interpretation improves on the current methodology by facilitating information fusion and common understanding of that information. The second step is the foundational element in development of a commonly agreed upon and defined human domain. This occurs while constraining the information flow so that it does not overwhelm the participants.³⁸ However, it does not specifically call for additional infrastructure, but instead repurposes existing structures and skills to meet the informational needs of the organization. To achieve this, a decentralized control

35 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22.

36 Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 267.

37 John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in The Information Age* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), 153.

38 John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *Swarming & the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 60.

of information to ensure the widest possible aperture for information collection.³⁹ The command structures should synchronize collected data, and develop a shared understanding based on this synchronization. This phase is typified by horizontally distributed information processing that links in as many collectors as possible, while maintaining focus on key regions, persons, or nodes. This phase culminates with a commonly collected, developed and agreed upon information and influence estimate, a “holistic population assessment.” Today’s battlefields require a means to plan and execute “influence targeting” along with a means to measure the extent to which a kinetic or non-kinetic effort generates the appropriate response in a population. This means that civil targeting and kinetic targeting are not conducted independently of one another, but processed concurrently as a concerted effort.

The considerable degree to which red and white information are kept separate reflects an institutional line of thought that must be addressed at a fundamental level. Although the barriers between these resources cannot completely be removed, the synchronization of information and intelligence allows the recipient to understand population activity in context. Ben Connable refers to “fusion [as] not only a function of analysis, but also [as] a way of thinking about both the analytic problem and the analytic output.”⁴⁰ Adopting systems that view information and intelligence as contributories to one another provides that synthesis. Talent management and training to accomplish this needs to occur commensurately if they are to have the impact they should.

As in any new doctrine or methodology there will need to be changes, but the key to what is recommended here is that it will not require significant shifts in command structure. As Blanken and Overbaugh note in their examination of the Flynn Report, the better changes are the ones that are resource efficient, but are cognizant of the needs of

³⁹ John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *Swarming & the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 46.

⁴⁰ Ben Connable, *Military Intelligence Fusion for Complex Operations: A New Paradigm* (Santa Monica: RAND 2012), 4.

environments ranging from the conventional to the unconventional.⁴¹ Simultaneous development of training and doctrine must occur as the holistic understanding of the environment matures. The broad information sample is meant to avoid cultural oversimplification. This occurs when anthropologists use narrow information streams to create overgeneralized and far-reaching “national personalities” that do not accurately reflect reality.⁴² Having decentralized data collection, shared and appropriately scaled understanding of a population and informed guidance and directives that are made with clear understanding of their potential effect will alleviate the dangers of oversimplification. On the inverse, the danger of swamping the process through complexity must be mitigated via a command or staff presence that can discipline the process, but not direct what becomes commonly accepted. There are already existing business practices for innovative problem solving that define the requirements of such a position. In short, rather than assuming a directive role, this person assumes the role of intermediary.

There is a need for separate boards or processes; the nature of the operations they direct are different enough to substantiate separate operational practices. However, the core of comprehension is synchronized, and collaboratively collected and developed information. However the information integration occurs, the systems and personnel that conduct them cannot simply be tacked on to the existing structure. They must come from within the structure, be organic to the unit or units that operate them, and be seamlessly integrated. This degree of integration ensures information processing and dissemination up and down the chain of command is done expeditiously and clearly. Creating another structure has the potential of falling into the trap of what Arquilla and Ronfelt refer to as “the historical tendency of military organizations [to] use new capabilities to support

41 Justin Overbaugh, and Leo Blanken , “Looking for Intel?... Or Looking for Answers? Reforming Military Intelligence for a Counterinsurgency Environment,” *Intelligence and National Security* 27, no. 4 (2012), 572.

42 Barak A. Salmoni, and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 2008), 18.

existing missions, and to oppose new capabilities that threaten existing missions.”⁴³ Given the slow integration or outright rejection of new technologies or organizations historically demonstrated by the military, reorganizing organic structures while retaining and amplifying the expertise of the existing personnel only serves to make units more effective. In the quest to gain better understanding of global operating environments ARSOF 2022 seeks to “optimize resourcing and commodity areas” to improve the breadth, execution, and impact of non-lethal tools.⁴⁴ Many of the latent skills to provide a better informational understanding already exists in command structures, but they lack the methodology to do so. At a fundamental level, the Barber Pole is less a matter of new structures or training new individuals, but the synchronization of existing systems. These systems cannot operate in a vacuum, nor are they sufficient to develop shared informational clarity in the long term without additional resources outside the command structure.

Shortcomings from intelligence estimates in recent conflicts can be traced back to the same root issue, the glut of information and the paucity of doctrine and organizational structure to adequately process this information in a timely manner so to inform a commander’s decisions. The market for programs and tools meant to map and illuminate networks has swelled considerably since 2001, but these programs often encounter more problems than generate solutions over the long term. The inability to understand a population, select appropriate red and white data to inform a decision matrix, and execute operations represents the primary flaw in the information cycle itself. In his discussion on swarming tactics, Arquilla refers to the danger of “overloading” as part of an enemy’s tactical advantage.⁴⁵ I submit there is an additional danger in the friendly forces overloading themselves with data. Time is a scarce commodity in the military decision

⁴³ John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in The Information Age* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), 90.

⁴⁴ United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School’s Office of Strategic Communication, “ARSOF 2022,” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3–31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

making pool of resources, and so information must be as complete as possible, but also be tailored by a “viable assumptive framework.”⁴⁶

Information sharing and horizontally distributed information processing systems both human and mechanized must be enforced at every level. While computer systems are now robust enough to tackle enormous amounts of data, they still rely on two flawed structures, those that take the initial assessment, and those that interpret the data. Simply absorbing the information is not enough, nor is hoarding the data for the purposes of maintaining the informational upper hand. The process itself should mirror existing targeting boards or similarly command-driven processes in that it is given both weight and incentive to have value and expedient results. While there are existing processes that are meant to address historically-understood “lines of operation” (i.e., IO working group, non-lethal effects boards) the separation of these boards generally yields poor, uncoordinated results. Synchronizing the information process forces existing structures to integrate and thus cross-pollenate information. The effect of this data should be a comprehension that is both geospatial and temporal in nature and can “depict the evolution of relationships in a specific geographic area and offer clues as to how they will continue to evolve in the future.”⁴⁷

In some cases, the depiction of information at different levels may need to be represented differently. Information that is essential to tactical success may have virtually no impact on strategic and operational efforts, hence the need for common understanding at every level. Information estimates aggregate up the chain, meaning that each staff section must correctly interpret information and come to their own estimate that reflects their informational needs and strategic goals. This does not mean that strategy and tactical success are not closely linked, but that information is not always weighed equally

⁴⁶ Leo J Blanken, and Justin Overbaugh, “Are We Assuming the Worst about Assumptions? Deduction and Induction in COIN,” *Military Intelligence* 13 (2013): 195.

⁴⁷ Kevin P Burke, “Civil Reconnaissance; Separating the Insurgent from the Population.” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2007).

up a chain of command. There are similarities across each level of command, but each layer must be viewed as its own operating space.

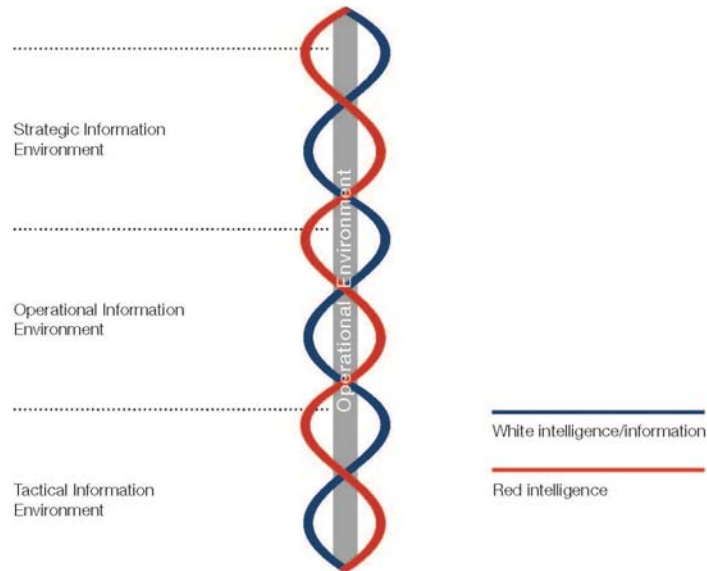


Figure 2. Graphical depiction of red and white information streams intersecting at critical points in the collection process.

Note that in the conceptual representation in Figure 2, the streams don't necessarily integrate as much as they complement each other. Throughout the process is the constant update and development of the commonly accepted operational environment. Because of its proximity to tactical operations, and close relationship to the strategic policy makers, the operational level will likely be the central focus of the Barber Pole process because it will be the first step up the ladder where tactical information is fused and understood, and the last place guidance will be dissected into operationalized guidance. The impact of the Barber Pole is not solely kinetic targeting or mission design; it is a measure of influence both positive and negative of the human domain. While influence alone may appear to be limiting, understanding causality as it links to the

influence of a population, or to continues in its support thereof, informs the important ways and means question.⁴⁸

Coordination and interpretation sits at the core of the Barber Pole, without a dynamic representation of a target population, there is no way of accurately predicting or interpreting reaction to military influence. Interpreting data cannot be viewed as a unique function that is the responsibility of a singular staff function, like the population it models, it is a moving, fluctuating estimate that should resemble the predispositions of the target population. The following phase builds upon this understanding by assigning appropriate military effort where it is likely to have the most impact, according to the common understanding of the information environment.

3. Phase Three: Production

Production is the final phase of the process, and is where capabilities are matched with vulnerabilities across the population, and where information is collected to further determine effect and impact. In this phase the outputs differ from tactical to strategic in scope and complexity. Information estimates are anchored in the tactical estimates, but still synchronized and guided via strategic and operational guidance. The information and population estimates are tools to predict the impact of the entire spectrum of operations. They should inform a command about the types of operations will have maximum utility in the most susceptible areas. Within this final step is an information loop that provides feedback to inform the planning process for follow-on operations. These assessments link strategists directly link to the MOE via the continuous tactical and operational updates to the informational estimate.

Production begins at the tactical level, where information collected must be done in such a way that it is designed for integration into a larger construct. FM 3–24, *Counterinsurgency* notes that, “Insurgencies are local. They vary greatly in time and space. The insurgency one battalion faces will often be different from that faced by an

⁴⁸ Derek S. Reveron, and James L. Cook, *Developing Strategists: Translating National Strategy Into Theater Strategy* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2009).

adjacent battalion.”⁴⁹ This means that the commonly held understanding of one location will almost certainly not be shared by other tactical locations. But at an operational level, the sum total of the data collected provides clarity of purpose, effect, and determines the needs of follow-on operations. Even so, the weight of the information and understanding of the environment must be delicately balanced between that which the tactical commander knows, and the understanding of the operational commander’s guidance and overall mission.

The breadth and depth of information available to collectors can quickly overwhelm both information and intelligence systems and personnel they are intended to support. To avoid this, the solution here leverages existing technologies and command and information structures to focus the information to a more appropriate “network” focused design, rather than the traditional sectional or pipe construct that exists today.⁵⁰ The solutions here must follow a very fine line, they must be substantial enough to include a wider array of data but not so overburden the system that “the information gathered in these centers would not have gone through the traditional winnowing process of the military intelligence reporting chain.”⁵¹

The greater complexity of information at each level makes interpreting that information increasingly more difficult up the chain. The initial collectors and interpreters of the collected data at the tactical level must be fully aware of the supported commands mission and desired end state to ensure information is answering the demands of strategy. Clausewitz envisioned knowledge growing increasingly complex as one moves up the chains of command⁵², the contemporary nature of conflict has shifted the command centers of gravity when it comes to information. The strategic estimate is

⁴⁹ Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters: Department of the Army 2006).

⁵⁰ John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *Swarming & the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000), 66-67.

⁵¹ Leo J. Blanken, and Justin Overbaugh. “Looking for Intel?... Or Looking for Answers? Reforming Military Intelligence for a Counterinsurgency Environment.” *Intelligence and National Security* 27, no.4 (2012), 570.

⁵² *ibid.*, 146.

conducted at the highest levels of command, but the key influencers in this estimate reside at the tactical and (where appropriate) operational level. Information and the defining characteristics of a culture are woven into the fabric of a population, they must be teased out like the strands of a web. Commanders are often noted for their insatiable need for definable data, instead, were decision makers allowed access to the full spectrum of information in a way that was digestible but still instructive they might avoid the trap many fell into during the Vietnam conflict, wherein information was used to reinforce inaccurate commanders' assumptions.^{53 54}

Defining how a commander fits into this process requires a delicate balance of command presence without unduly influencing the process itself. As Greg Daddis explores in his book, officers in Vietnam faced a similar conundrum wherein few officers "possessed any real knowledge on how to gauge progress in an unconventional environment," and senior commanders would provide unclear guidance or "embraced [the idea] that everything that was measurable should in fact be measured."⁵⁵ A key aspect of the Barber Pole is the participative nature of information gathering and interpretation, which includes a command presence. This necessitates a redefined command role in the information gathering process. As Van Creveld states "command cannot be understood in isolation...no single [tool] is in itself sufficient to guarantee the successful or even adequate conduct of command in war."⁵⁶ Still, to gain a comprehensive understanding of an environment, a commander needs to be present in the development of the commonly accepted informational environment. Rather than what is now a more iterative presence, a more participative role would potentially increase command comprehension.

Data are increasingly recognized as valuable to overall comprehension of the battlefield, therefore a likely trend will be the act of protecting or hoarding datum.

⁵³ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 259.

⁵⁴ Gregory A. Daddis, *No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press 2011), 47.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

⁵⁶ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 261.

Outside of the military, the resistance to data sharing and processing increases because of the organizational biases. Among the challenges to integrating other agencies is that “the well-established bureaucratic standards that account, often beneficially, for the divisions of labor that exist in the first place. Large organizations work hard to establish their core professional jurisdictions and associated expertise.”⁵⁷ The participating agencies might potentially be a combination of government agencies and non-government agencies with divergent goals. In the case of information sharing and development, these divergent goals will use their respective understanding of the population to justify their actions. The shared need for the same information is often a means of bridging ideological or institutional gaps. There will always be a need for combined USG agencies in the development of an information-based operational picture. However, it is the sum of the parts that creates a reinforcing structure, not the individual parts themselves that are critical to the development of operational awareness.

Beyond the systems themselves, the augmentation of the board itself takes the place of creating a new staff function. This allows existing contributors via staff functions to use existing structures to create a broader, more inclusive targeting board, where kinetic operations is not always the expected output. The augmented board has three very distinct purposes: to align collection priorities, interpret data collected, advise the planning process through predictive analysis, and assess the extent to which an operation has been successful. This staff function is unique from existing planning groups or boards, in that it is a required staff function with equally unique business practices. The organization itself along with its business practices is horizontally distributed, meaning that each member has an equivalent decision recommending authority and responsibility.

Production must also determine the degree of influence, which also serves to measure the degree of success a unit enjoys. This measurement is therefore exportable up and down the chain where successes now fit smoothly into the operational and strategic picture, and failures are depicted in real terms of impact. This also means that common

⁵⁷ Richard A. Laquement, “Integrating Civilian and Military Activities,” *Parameters: U.S. Army War College Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (Winter, 2011), 11.

measures of performance (kill counts, dollar expenditures, etc.) can no longer be used as metrics of success without being weighed against their overall impact on influence of the population. An additional benefit here is that it is no longer the responsibility of the higher command to pre-determine the measurements by which a subordinate will communicate its success or failure, but rather the unit itself sets the metric for influence, and then must meet that metric and provide proof of efficacy. There are some checks and balances in this regard as well, if a subordinate sets a measure of effectiveness and claims to meet that goal via measures it has set, although no discernable change to the behavior of the population comes about, a command has the option to call for additional resources to determine if the measures the subordinate unit set were feasible, achieved, or not suitable given the operational environment. This is no simple feat, and represents one of the bigger challenges facing military commanders. As Scott Sigmund Gartner notes; “different organizations might have different views of the same situation; because they are relying on different information for the understanding the situation.”⁵⁸ A collaborative information system will help alleviate some of the misinterpretations, because all participants must concur with the commonly agreed upon informational picture.

4. Implications

Populations and cultures differ worldwide; therefore there cannot be a singular solution to the Barber Pole. It is merely an adjustable framework that is implemented according to resources and levels of command, with the end result of a common information picture and a resultant influence estimate. Here, the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) provides two excellent cases for study in this regard. JSOTF-P is especially relevant because it relies deeply on information synchronization of all forms to create success both internally and externally. Because of the nature of the mission in the Philippines, the common metrics found in other regions cannot be applicable, which means that tactical successes do not always equate to strategic success.

⁵⁸ Scott Sigmund Gartner, *Strategic Assessment in War*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

What makes the JSOTF-P mission especially relevant, and thus clearly delineating success across several key strategic, national, and local audiences, is the recent “pivot” to Asia, making a common understanding of populations all the more critical.

We will look at two levels of operation and how information synchronization enables two very distinct lines of operation at the tactical level. Relationship building, and information resources often supersede the desire for kinetic successes. Influence in a region is measured in all forms, and uses a combination of intelligence and networked information collectors. We will examine some singular instances of how information is collected and analyzed, and how that information became a commonly agreed upon population estimate. We will then examine how at the national level that same information was used for very different purposes, and how simple metrics were insufficient tools for ensuring concurrence from partners inside the U.S. Government and acceptance from key governing officials within the Philippines. Finally, this commonly understood information was exported to strategic and regional levels to achieve U.S. policy goals.

III. THE CASE OF OEF-PHILIPPINES

There are few operational environments as complex as the one in the Southern Philippines, gaining a common understanding of the information relevant to the mission is equally as complex. Because U.S. forces are expressly prohibited from directly engaging in combat they have adjusted their focus to incorporate a broader spectrum of operations. These operations are then weighed according to their opportunity costs, and executed with the consent of and in conjunction with the Philippine government. The limitations placed on U.S. forces have compelled a reliance on information to maximize effect in a resource and time constrained environment. This effectively means that a common and accurate understanding of the environment is crucial to planning, as an inappropriate characterization of the population can render months of planning and effort impotent. Two former commanders of JSOTF-P Colonel Francis Beaudette and Captain R.V Gusentine, demonstrated the importance of synchronizing red and white information in their comments and guidance. Colonel Beaudette stated, “In the JSOTF, information is king.”⁵⁹ Captain Gusentine designated “Knowledge Creation and Sharing” as an actual line of effort to provide a “commonly accepted, commonly available view of the environment.”⁶⁰ Due to these attributes of the mission and environment, Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines (OEF-P) serves as an appropriate case study to assess the implications of the Barber Pole process. To do so, a longitudinal comparison⁶¹ will help illustrate the positive impact of operations as a broader information structure was sought, packaged, and used.

To examine closely how the Barber Pole process relates to operations in JSOTF-P we need to compare the three steps of the process in terms of the tactical and the strategic. The nature of the insurgency, Philippine political sensitivity to the presence of foreign troops, and the capacity of partnered units means that from a United States

⁵⁹ Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

⁶⁰ Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

⁶¹ John Gerring, *Case study research: principles and practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007), 155-156.

perspective, operations at the tactical and strategic level at times serve two disparate purposes. The unique environment of the Philippines meant information that was salient to tactical operations would not always have similar impact at a strategic level. Using the three steps of the Barber Pole process, this case study will review the tactical and strategic approaches to information.

In the tactical examination, information was collected, shared in such a way that a common understanding existed throughout the JSOTF. That shared understanding was then used to measure or demonstrate efficacy in a way appropriate to the mission. These MOE were not always immediately reflective of the strategic needs, and weren't necessarily indicative of measures established by the TSOC. Tactically, information feeds both relationships and measurements of success and also fills the more commonly used targeting methodology, which in turn augments ongoing relationship building efforts. The JSOTF priority for a "commonly accepted, commonly available view of the environment was meant to drive both understanding at all levels and synchronicity among all participants.⁶² This contrasts slightly with how information is used to feed operational decision making in that while relationships and information continue to be key, the "packaging"⁶³ of information changes as it is exported to the strategic level. In this case, the same requisite understanding of the population is necessary to communicate how effects, sometimes ancillary to other missions conducted, support or meet the expectations of national and strategic goals. The shared comprehension of the environment at all levels allows commanders to maximize the utility of that shared comprehension and then define success or failure in a way that is reflective of the informational environment.

Strategically, the JSOTF-P leadership must work in a nuanced and challenging environment where the partnered nation, regional governments, and even American political sensibilities must be taken into account. To meet these challenges, JSOTF-P continually reinforce their mission of building capacity in the Armed Forces of the

⁶² Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

⁶³ Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

Philippines (AFP) while heavily relying on CMO and other community outreach missions to convey a positive message and intent to the population of Mindanao. In the strategic review the same three areas are examined as in the tactical examination. On the tactical level, CMO is used for specific population-focused effect in the form of outreach, consequence mitigation, information procurement and reinforce the messages of peace and cooperation. Strategically, these same operations are used to generate cooperation and collaboration with both Philippine and international partners alike, as well as to convey the positive impact of American and Philippine solidarity. Although differently packaged, the same information and understanding at the tactical and operational levels has to be applied. I will also demonstrate how this use of information and the common understanding of influence at the strategic levels generate the same common understanding of the information environment to be used in three very diverse ways. Specifically, how commanders have used the same operations and information to communicate to a broader national and regional audience in a way that would be readily and openly received. Given the regional resistance to outside intervention or action that might be misconstrued as prelude to colonization it is imperative that all U.S. forces in the region be hyper-vigilant about the messages their operations convey. In the case of JSOTF-P the inability to conduct kinetic operations is useful, in that broad use of CMO and outreach at the tactical level mitigates the appearance of an occupying force and provides access to key partners within the Philippine government and military. The use of CMO reflects recognition of the information's importance while also representing a cultural sensitivity that should not be overlooked. It is the access and relationships developed from information and capacity building that gives JSOTF-P significant impact to an increasingly important region.

A. OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-PHILIPPINES BACKGROUND

As a 2012 examination published by the National Defense University's Center for Complex Operations states; "While U.S. direct action operations alone can make short-term gains against global terrorism, a U.S. kinetic approach is unsustainable in itself.

Partners are essential in the struggle against violent extremism, and partners may require the United States to adopt an indirect approach to a common challenge”⁶⁴ Understanding the value of the JSOTF-P mission first necessitates an understanding that the OEF-P mission had gone beyond its initial purpose of CT and aided in the achievement of both national and regional U.S. strategy. To that end, JSOTF-P faced an interesting dilemma in that measuring specific tactical successes that were critical to the efforts of the partnered AFP did not necessarily meet with any degree of specificity the greater U.S. goals. This led to the development of operations, which met “mutually overlapping interests.”⁶⁵ These were often conducted using CMO or public outreach activity because it allowed U.S. forces to participate directly, which generated numerous secondary benefits, conduits for information and intelligence being chief among them. For the U.S., CMO and CAO was specifically meant to “build the consensus [of overall efficacy], and maintain access to the population.”⁶⁶ In this capacity, CMO was uniquely suited to meeting the need for “cross functional teams of information collectors,”⁶⁷ and was welcomed by the AFP. This was in part due to the favoring of CMO over kinetic operations because it was less complex to execute and still provided excellent access to information and intelligence.⁶⁸

In truth, explaining how and why JSOTF-P has succeeded where other efforts have failed goes beyond simple metrics. The difficulty was, as Captain Robert Gusentine, former SOCPAC SOJ3 and a commander of JSOTF-P states, that: “[w]e understood what was going on, we didn’t know *why*...We didn’t have all the information to understand why.”⁶⁹ The challenge in the Philippines became less one of tactical victories, but more a struggle for information and the requisite access to that information. To meet the

64 Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, “Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian harm and the indirect approach,” *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012),131.

65 Christopher Brown, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

66 Christopher Brown, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

67 Christopher Brown, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

68 Sumner Rollings, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

69 Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

informational needs of his command, Gusentine established a “common assessment of the environment”⁷⁰ designed to produce “Informed, clever, and timely U.S.-’whole of government’-decisions and adaptive enterprise designs.”⁷¹ In addition to Gusentine’s Knowledge Creation and Sharing line of effort, the JSOTF also pursued a line of effort titled “Enterprise Design” that sought to cultivate broad relationships in order to synchronize objectives and actions.⁷² Merging information collected through relationships, intelligence, and existing informational pipelines meant that the JSOTF-P planning staff had to use innovative methods to incorporate the data they’d collected, and then use that information to define success in a tangible way. Gusentine’s successor, Colonel Beaudette, adopted his own methodology to meet the reporting needs during his tenure. Beaudette had his subordinates adapt a practice of “writing for purpose, and focusing on information that was pertinent to ongoing operations.”⁷³ Capturing the information in a means relevant to the target audience without corrupting its veracity is a never-ending process, but it is critical to generating utility from the JSOTF-P mission because of the breadth of contributors and participants in the Southern Philippines.

Consistent with Clausewitz and Van Creveld, Gusentine ensured there was a central “clearing house for information” and a “center of gravity for information fusion” by placing the commander as central to this process, thus, the commander became the intersection for understanding and disseminating information.⁷⁴ Similarly, Beaudette chose to “circulate as much as possible, to listen [to subordinates], pay attention to key details, and share that information within the JSOTF.” As in every command, the commander must assess where he or she can best gain the maximal understanding of information, but cannot be so deeply ingrained so to override or impede the process itself. In the case of Gusentine, using the commander as the clearinghouse for common

⁷⁰ Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

⁷¹ Robert Gusentine, “CTTSO Abstract.” paper presented to Combatting Terrorism Technology Support Group, Republic of the Philippines, January 7, 2011.

⁷² Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

⁷³ Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

⁷⁴ Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

understanding met the requirement for a commonly agreed upon informational estimate. By moving through the battlefield and interacting with subordinates, Beaudette achieved the same common understanding of operations. Methodology, in this case, is less important than a commander's involvement in the shared understanding of the information environment. Over a period of three years, both commanders identified their informational shortcomings and developed processes within the existing command structure to meet their needs at a tactical level. Although the two differ slightly on how information and intelligence were used, their recognition that integrated information systems was important is a critical revelation.

Having informed and involved commanders is certainly not a revelation to mission planning, what is revelatory is the fact that both of the aforementioned commanders used their positions as central to the collection process and shared developed and tested understanding with senior and subordinate commanders, host nation forces, and the U.S. Embassy. In the U.S., Civil Affairs operations have a specific informational role to play under the title Civil Information Management (CIM), but in the case of the AFP, CIM applied to all pertinent white information and was collected by the entire AFP. Because of this, leveraging relationships to gain better access to information was both a measure of success and a tool to gain better understanding of the environment. As an example, to give his staff a better understanding of the population, Beaudette commissioned a public perception survey through the Army center for army lessons learned (CALL). The results of the survey, coupled with the existing information systems within the JSOTF rounded out the informational environment for Beaudette's staff, and therefore led to a more accurate estimate of populations prone to influence. Similarly, Gusentine directed his Military Information Support Team to contract with a host nation social survey organization to discreetly map the Mindanao human "power" network.⁷⁵

The adaptation of integrated information systems has grown and developed over time, and was built on both American and Philippine trial and error. Indeed, the history of the JSOTF-P Mission and their partnered units delineates the difficulty the United States

⁷⁵ Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

and Philippine government agencies endured before developing their information models. As illustrated in the following section, these models first emerged at the tactical level, and resonated up the chains of command as they began to bear fruit.

B. VARYING THE ROLE OF INFORMATION AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL

1. PRE-TEST: Before the Synchronization of Information and Intel

At the tactical level, information is a tool, a commodity, and a means of measuring effect. Therefore, information collectors focus on “networked nodes of information.”⁷⁶ Prior to 2000, the Philippines encountered a series of terrorist attacks, which elicited “heavy handed...response, causing significant numbers of civilian casualties and extensive damage to property.”⁷⁷ The AFP relied on a singular, kinetic, approach that did not take into account the population and its response to that influence. The imprecision of the AFP approach demonstrates that even along the narrow kinetic band of operations the intelligence and information required to measure impact did not exist. This approach created a rift between the population and military, and indicated that there was not an accurate nor commonly held understanding of the population to help tailor operations appropriately.

Had the AFP used a process like the Barber Pole, the gross misunderstanding of the population’s reaction to these kinetic attacks would likely not have occurred. Although he was referring to American intelligence capabilities, Senator Saxby Chambliss’ comments on intelligence are especially salient: “People who perpetuate the distinction between “national” and “tactical” intelligence during our debate on intelligence reform simply do not understand the sophistication of our intelligence and communication systems.”⁷⁸ One might argue that Senator Chambliss should include the interoperability of those systems in his list as well. This sophistication and

⁷⁶ Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012), 122.

⁷⁸ Saxby Chambliss, "We have Not Correctly Framed the Debate on Intelligence Reform," *Parameters : Journal of the US Army War College* 35, no. 1 (2005), 8.

interoperability reflects a growing desire for systems that reflect the information they procure. As Blank opines; “[the] lack of cultural understanding has cost us dearly and will go on doing so unless suitable action to reconstruct an intelligence system and societal structure capable of supporting it.”⁷⁹ American forces had to imbue the value of a broader scope of operations and information than they were using, which would require time and persistent engagement.

Many COIN experts imply that cultural knowledge by itself is sufficient to do COIN well. This example shows that this is not the case. The AFP had that local cultural knowledge, but still inadvertently hampered their own operations because they failed to first understand the population. The Barber Pole methodology would have helped understand why heavy-handed approaches in a disenfranchised population would not work. Further, it might have prevented unnecessary losses and prevented additional fracturing that continues to plague peace efforts in the Philippines today. Failing to generate a comprehensive understanding of the population and relying too heavily on basic kinetic targeting methodology violates two principles of the Barber Pole; that there be a shared understanding of the informational environment that reflected reality, and that the operational concept of operations were not integrated into a larger view of influence. The result of the early stages of the AFP campaign was that the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) grew in strength and their attacks grew in intensity and brazenness.⁸⁰ After the arrival of the American special operations task force the AFP began to adjust their modus operandi as it pertained to the population.⁸¹

The initial counterinsurgency failures of the AFP are also excellent examples of how a cultural awareness combined with tactical successes are not sufficient to meet national goals. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the AFP’s campaign certainly scored

⁷⁹ Stephen J Blank, “U.S. Intelligence at a Crossroads” *Strategic Studies Institute*, June 17, 2011. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Op-Ed-US-Intelligence-at-a-crossroads/2011/6/17>.

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012), 120.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, 122.

several hits on ASG members, which should have reduced the capacity of the organization. However, the manner in which those operations were conducted effectively negated any tactical gains by negatively influencing the population against the AFP. Strategically, this misunderstanding of tactical successes and operational failures was similar to those of the Vietnam War wherein tactical successes and body counts never yielded widespread positive reaction in the target population. At the tactical level, a commonly agreed upon information estimate may have prevented some of the earlier failures of the AFP, because it forced them to examine the potential outcomes before executing an operation. The Philippines is not the only country where this is the case, inaccurate assessments built from incomplete information is a worldwide phenomenon. During the Algerian war from 1954-1962 the French repeatedly scored tactical victories only to have them fall flat on the Algerian and French public because of the heavy-handed manner with which they were conducted, and the lack of French regard for Algerian and European public opinion.⁸² It was not until the AFP, in cooperation with the special operations task force, made a concerted effort to incorporate a holistic population and influence-based understanding into tactical planning that they enjoyed success against the terror groups in the southern Philippines.

2. POST-TEST: After the Incorporation of a Broader Informational Environment

The appreciation for the importance of information and relationships emerged gradually. As it did, it became apparent to planners that if the majority of information is coming from limited data streams, their ability depict success with any degree of confidence was limited. The collective informational successes over time slowly generated an emerging picture at the tactical level. Terrorist organizations motivations and desires were being blunted by the combined efforts of the U.S. and AFP.⁸³ The ability to measure incremental success over time is exceedingly difficult, however there

⁸² Evans, Martin, *Algeria: France's undeclared war* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁸³ Robert V Gusentine, *Speed of Sovereignty: Presentation to the Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups*, PowerPoint, 22 slides (Newport, RI: US Naval War College), 2013.

were some key points where the relationships and trust built between the U.S. Forces and AFP began to manifest in positive, discernible ways. A recent non-kinetic example of this is the implementation of the Internal Peace and Security Plan, which among other things, mandated that AFP operations would be 80% CMO and 20% kinetic.⁸⁴ To an extent, this plan reflects a decade of close interaction with U.S. forces that have helped professionalize the CMO capability and hone the lethality of their strike forces. Tactically, the skills and practices of the AFP increased over time, and there was a gradual understanding that they must consider the second-order effects on the population before conducting any operations.⁸⁵

It is important to note the limitations placed upon U.S. forces under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the absence of U.S.-led kinetic activity might appear to undermine the use of the influence targeting and Barber Pole method. In fact, the opposite is the case. Kinetic operations have been an integral part of the overall strategy to combat terrorism in Mindanao, the executor of those missions is irrelevant to the overall process. The operating environment in the Philippines highlights the utility of the Barber Pole at the tactical level because unlike other conflicts the arbitrary use of force as a fallback measure was no longer available. JSOTF-P members are forced to gain effect through as broad a spectrum as possible, which in turn develops information. This information then becomes a tool at the tactical level for planning of additional missions, but most importantly to help shape and encourage appropriate kinetic activity from the AFP. Referring to the intrinsic value of information, a former member senior enlisted advisor from Task Force Archipelago noted, “We had access to help and advice, but information was still a bargaining chip.”⁸⁶ Thus, information at the tactical level is used both as a tool and as a commodity, which underscores the criticality of having an accurate and complete understanding of a population’s motivations.

⁸⁴ Republic of the Philippines Department of National Defense, *Internal Peace and Security Plan* (Quezon City, Philippines: General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2010).

⁸⁵ Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012), 125.

⁸⁶ Thomas Egan, interview with author, Coronado, CA, August 28, 2013.

In a country where relationships potentially determine the likelihood of success, information becomes “a commodity up and down the chain of command.”⁸⁷ In the case of one JSOTF task force, the SEAL team leader tasked to work with the Philippine National Police Special Action Force (PNP SAF) measured success not only in the tactical victories of his partnered force, but in the strength of the relationships with their counterparts. This point should not be overlooked, because while intangible, the flexibility and trust built into long-standing relationships meant that critical informational nodes were kept open, opportunities to work and train together remained available, and provided “instant buy in”⁸⁸ so that as other units assumed the mission those relationships would carry over as a result of established good will. Although these metrics are hard to accurately depict in a classical sense, the depicting these successes in a tangible way becomes critically important at the operational level. What is fundamentally being accomplished is the targeted accumulation of information to depict “marginal and incremental successes as tactical improvements.”⁸⁹

Amplifying the efforts of the tactical and operational advisory work done by the task forces was a sizable CMO campaign aimed at vulnerable and susceptible to influence, positive or negative. As a former deputy commander states; “CMO [in the Philippines] creates opportunities to continue contact and sets conditions for greater contact for informational and, ultimately, intelligence purposes.” The AFP’s use of civil-military operations generated positive results for both information collection and outreach purposes. As the capability of the AFP increased these events “tended to sway the population as well as aid in counterterrorism operations.”⁹⁰ As restrictive as the operating guidance in the Philippines was to U.S. operations, CMO was popular and more politically palatable method of achieving multiple successes at once. In terms of information, CMO activities gave the AFP and U.S. access to information and in some

87 Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

88 Sumner Rollings, interview with author, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

89 Christopher Brown, interview with author, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

90 Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012), 123.

cases opened the door for potential intelligence collection as time went by. These activities also had the residual effect of shaping opinions about the U.S. both locally and nationally, and served to open conduits with which the U.S. could garner additional information, resources, and relationships.

One Special Forces Operational Detachment Bravo (SFODB, ODB) on Jolo Island adopted a multifaceted means of sharing information in the form of weekly meetings, a central repository for all information and intelligence physically held at the ODB, and a standardized collection tool for civil information.⁹¹ While each of these would not be sufficient to meet the criteria of shared and commonly agreed upon informational assessments, the combination of these elements gave the tactical commander sufficient comprehension of the environment to generate decisions on operations. It also provided a matrix for feedback that would meet the operational and strategic reporting needs of the JSOTF. In other cases, such as with the partnership with the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force (PNP SAF) the PNP's existing information structure was strong enough to "develop [the] HUMINT and information we [the JSOTF] needed so that we did not need to augment their information network."⁹² In both circumstances, the information was developed in such a way that it was relevant to the operating environment, provided the best possible understanding of the informational environment, and was done in as economical a means as possible.

Depicting tactical success in the Philippines relies on the understanding of how seemingly outlying information impacts the overall environment. Information has a value beyond substance, as do the informational relationships. As reflected by two previous commanders, there is no singular answer gaining shared understanding. Ensuring common understanding is a cornerstone to influence of the human domain. Tactically, influence occurs across the entire spectrum of operations. Measuring the impact to influence requires a greater breadth of understanding, in JSOTF-P this is developed at the operational level. Successful operations are depicted in two ways: to reinforce following

⁹¹ Ryan Hartwig, email interview, 24 October, 2013.

⁹² Sumner Rollings, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

tactical operations and information collection, and to inform the collective common understanding of the environment at the operational level. In the strategic level study, we will examine how information impacts activity above the tactical level.

3. The Impact of Synchronized Information at the Strategic Level

Strategic information needs in the Philippines differed from those at the tactical. This was primarily done for reasons of impact. Tactical successes in the Philippines as an aggregate held intrinsic value to U.S. strategic efforts, but were not necessarily direct contributors. Strategic efforts focused heavily on the diplomatic and interagency, where actions taken at the tactical level had little impact. Strategically, information generated at the tactical level was repackaged through language and focus to have greater impact. This approach to information took a larger, long-term view of operations and used the robust tactical information structures to bolster comprehension at a national level. In some cases, information ancillary to ongoing AFP and U.S. tactical operations was of value to other agencies, information became a valuable tool with which the Americans could leverage strategic partnerships.

The announcement of the pivot to the Asia-Pacific Theater placed the JSOTF-P mission in a new light regionally, and gave strategists an additional tool with which they could extoll the benefits of long-term partnerships. Nationally, the Philippines has a vocal contingent within the Philippine government that opposes the US military presence.⁹³ In the eyes of many in this movement, the presence of a foreign military on Philippine soil is tantamount to a colonial occupation. Also complicating the OEF-P mission are those sympathetic to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) desire for separation from the Philippines. As the proficiency of the AFP improved, and the skills of other related agencies grew in policing and governance the growth had a stabilizing effect on the government of the Philippines. Proponents of the JSOTF-P mission now had the impact of community outreach and the success of a capable AFP to bolster the argument for the presence of a foreign assistance force.

⁹³ *Asian Journal*. "Controversy Clouds U.S.-Philippines Military Pact," October 6, 2009. http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=abc2f5ef26f7fad5eaeaf180550420da

The importance of gaining the support of the interagency to OEF-P cannot be understated. Interagency relationships proved critical to the strategic success of the mission, beginning with those inside the U.S. Embassy and USAID offices. As Capt. Gusentine states; “The interagency was needed for [the JSOTF] to execute missions effectively and vice versa.”⁹⁴ Even with a unified USG effort under an ambassador, strong relationships between American government agencies require fostering. This is also reflected in the SOCOM 2020 document which states that; SOF operations “[demand] unprecedented levels of trust, confidence, and understanding – conditions that can’t be surged.”⁹⁵ Building a shared understanding with other USG counterparts meant that “...kinetic strikes can have an effect across the JOA...”⁹⁶ Over time, a greater appreciation for the impact of tactical success at the national level developed, and helped tactical planners determine what information was critical to all levels. This streamlined collection efforts, built trust amongst USG partners, and solidified key relationships in the Embassy and USAID with longevity and influence that went beyond the JSOTF-P mandate. A metric of this was the establishment of a USAID liaison officer, wherein the JSOTF was invited to assign a military member as an acting member of the USAID staff. Given the need for an outreach campaign via CMO and similar activities, the relationship with USAID not only strengthened intergovernmental interoperability, but helped facilitate a shared understanding of key political and cultural landscapes.

Within the Embassy, a commonly shared informational environment meant adjusting the language and terms to meet the needs of the embassy. The JSOTF had to “develop a way to inject itself into the decision cycle at the embassy, to ensure [shared] knowledge management and communication.”⁹⁷ To this end, the JSOTF Deputy Commanders (DCO) were key actors. Lieutenant Colonel Eric Walker worked alongside the Deputy Chief of Mission to establish the Mindanao Working Group as the central

94 Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

95 United States Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, *SOF Vision 2020* (Washington, DC: MacDill AFB, 1996), 1.

96 Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

97 Francis Beaudette, telephone interview with author, October 18, 2013.

information exchange hub and mechanism for synchronized effort.⁹⁸ To augment the messages being sent to the embassy, Lieutenant Colonel Walker's successor Commander Christopher Brown regularly visited and met with Embassy personnel in Manila. Because of the relationships he built, Brown was asked to participate in the publishing of key cables pertaining to the JSOTF. As Brown states, "Cables shape policy, having access to the embassy like we had allowed us to help shape strategic decision making."⁹⁹ Placing the JSOTF DCO in Manila with regular access to the U.S. Embassy and key members of the AFP facilitated shared understanding of the environment and ensured that understanding was communicated in appropriate language. Outside the embassy, the relationships with international governmental and non-governmental organizations represented another aspect of information sharing. Aid organizations spend significant resources and time to understand where their assistance is appropriate. Like their military counterparts, where foreign aid falls short it can have devastating effect. A particular example can be found in Dr. Sophal Ear's excoriation of aid in Cambodia, where he concludes; "foreign aid has a number of unintended consequences in postconflict environments."¹⁰⁰ Like military aid, those consequences stem from failure to understand the population from the perspective of influence.

The relationships at the U.S. embassy supported the combined messaging to regional powers and planners to reinforce American goals for the Pacific theater. Two important considerations with a shift to the Pacific are basing considerations for U.S. forces, and the growth of intra-governmental agreements and relationships that reinforce the utility of an American presence. The strength of a unified message bolstered by appropriate information and tailored to the audience has reaped significant benefit for the United States. The most recent of these benefits was the agreement by the Aquino government to allow additional military use of existing military bases inside the Philippines. The potential for the presence of additional U.S. troops ostensibly would

⁹⁸ Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

⁹⁹ Christopher Brown, interview, Coronado, CA, 28 August, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Sophal Ear, *Aid Dependence in Cambodia : How Foreign Assistance Undermines Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 10.

have residual effect across the region by stymying the attempts of nations to impede American diplomatic efforts, or strengthening existing relationships. Sustaining the argument for a greater American presence must be a common understanding of the strategic environment and the receptivity of the respective regional populations.

Early in the JSOTF-P mission, the AFP placed heavy emphasis on CT operations, and not the impact to the population. The JSOTF and U.S. Embassy needed a key indicator of operational level of success that would translate to a strategic message and went beyond deterring terrorist activity. The opening of a popular fast food restaurant in Isabella city was mistakenly agreed upon an indicator that the insurgency had been quelled, and the tide of violence had turned. The challenge to this assumption came shortly after with repeated terror attacks on Isabelle city where the restaurant had opened. A combination of kinetic and CMO operations to that point seemed to indicate that a nationally branded restaurant would not make a move into a dangerous area, lest they become the backdrop for a terrorist attack. Two incorrect assumptions drove this misunderstanding; the first was the expectation that a corporate entity would have better understanding of a region than the combined information of the JSOTF and its partners. The second incorrect assumption was that trends in Isabella city represented trends on the rest of the island. When the ARMM was established, Isabella city opted not to join and remained part of the larger Philippine government. This decision yielded significant economic gains for Isabella over the rest of Basilan. Those economic gains did not immediately equate to degradation in the insurgency, and the attacks on Basilan continued. However, after a focus developed on the population, a staff sociologist at the JSOTF learned from local government officials that a critical indicator of stability in the southeastern Mindanao islands was the presence of the Badjao tribe, also known as “water gypsies,” whose livelihoods depended on secure waterways.

a. Conclusion

The arguments presented in the previous chapter developed the theoretical basis of the Barber Pole methodology. When examined through the lens of contemporary operations we can see where implementation of the process or critical parts of the process—or critical parts of the process – may exist. The Joint Special Operations Task

Force – Philippines is an excellent example of shifting focus to target-based operations to a more holistic view of the information environment led to incremental successes at the tactical level, and significant success at the national and theater levels. As the AFP and U.S. partnership grew, the diplomatic and strategic partnership followed along with a growing understanding that “there was a value aligning and exercising influence over the operating environment.”¹⁰¹ The mission in the southern Philippines operates in an odd environment where tactical and operational successes don’t always meet national or theater objectives but have considerable impact at the tactical level. Yet, the inverse is not necessarily the case. Thus, over a decade, as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have become more adept at counter-insurgency and counter-terror operations, the operational planning in JSOTF-P have had to use their meager resources to meet goals and objectives that do not always overlap.

To combat this problem, tactical operations shifted their focus from kinetic and personality targeting to full-spectrum influence operations. Tactical successes were now measured in critical relationships and collected information as well as the kinetic capture and kill missions. The power of information and the criticality of reliable and broad sources thereof means operations could no longer simply focus on rudimentary metrics. Measurement had to be accompanied with tangible relational or informational benefit that would strengthen the position of U.S. interests at the national level. At the operational and higher levels, messages and common understanding of how tactical successes affected the overall population amplified those messages. This common understanding gave leadership diplomatic leverage to gain considerable strategic success, not the least of which were additional basing considerations and ongoing foreign military sales agreements. Highlighting the success of the OEF mission is important because in a short amount of time American forces were able to “overc[o]me barriers of authority, resources, disparate goals, and culture and [move] toward a synergistic whole-of-government approach.”¹⁰² Although the American strategic advancements cannot solely

101 Robert Gusentine, telephone interview with author, September 16, 2013.

102 Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis and Sarah Sewall, “Operation Enduring Freedom—Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach,” *PRISM* 3, no. 4 (2012), 134.

be attributed to JSOTF-P and its successes, the mission in the southern Philippines continues to be a critical diplomatic tool with which the U.S. can achieve its “pivot” to Asia.

IV. CONCLUSION

Information may equate to power on the contemporary battlefield, but as Borer writes; “information, like power, is intrinsically difficult to measure, categorize, and understand.”¹⁰³ Faster computer systems and emerging social network analysis tools remove some of the uncertainty, and now give combatant commanders at the tactical and operational levels a population-based comprehension of how their operations may be changing the overall environment.

The Barber Pole process streamlines and empowers information, making it more applicable to planning and decision making. There is no existing means of predicting human behavior other than informed estimates derived from past experience. Science, mathematics, sociology, and numerous other disciplines will continue to attempt to decipher human behavior with greater clarity. No matter how advanced the academic rigor and technology become, there will always be intangible elements of strategy and tactics that can render even the best concepts ineffective. The Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) is designed to inform a commander and guide them through the possible decisions available, to the best possible option given their understanding of the environment.¹⁰⁴ The Barber Pole addresses the fundamental flaw in MDMP and strategic planning in general; the bifurcation of information and intelligence networks. This separation only confounds the understanding the conflict space – namely the civilian population. In the conclusion I will discuss the policy and strategy impacts via the Barber Pole, discuss some minor restructuring of existing staff organization, describe some of the potential incentive structures for implementation, and discuss how region-specific implementation measures for the Barber Pole might impact structure and skills within the existing command models.

¹⁰³ Douglas A Borer, “Why is information strategy difficult?” in *Information Strategy and Warfare : A Guide to Theory and Practice*, ed. John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 236.

¹⁰⁴ Department of the Army, *Army Planning and Orders Production* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2005).

A. USING THE BARBER POLE TO INFLUENCE POLICY

Policy is derived from three primary foci; ends, ways, and means. Although the Barber Pole would potentially impact all three, it is designed to have the greatest impact on the first. Defining ends, specifically as an expression of goals, at a national level is typically broad and lacks specificity. This is done for several reasons, but it makes for significant dissonance between tactical measures of effectiveness and the strategic ends. Reconciling broad guidance and specificity at the tactical level is exceptionally difficult, and cannot be solved with information alone. Strategic requirements that are either outside the means of tactical units' capability are as ineffectual as no strategy at all. A holistic estimate provides both common understanding and, when focused on leveraging influence, helps determine which types of missions are likely to enjoy success and where.

Ends are determined according to how and the degree to which they meet national interests,¹⁰⁵ but rely on a clear understanding of an environment to determine both feasibility and the resources required to accomplish them. Ends, ways, and means are closely interconnected, but it is the defining of ends that instructs subordinates. The Barber Pole sets the informational conditions for a commonly accepted information environment, which means that instructions given and feedback from such an environment would encounter fewer misunderstandings. Specifically, a shared understanding of the environment under the Barber Pole means that staffs and commanders would operate from the same information estimate, influence estimate, and would ostensibly share a similar conceptualization of their particular AOR. Instructions in such an environment are far less likely to become misinterpreted down the chain of command. Commanders at a strategic level can then issue regional guidance with better specificity. In return, commanders are given information updates that are relevant and reflect the extent to which influence has been appropriately applied.

¹⁰⁵ Derek S Reveron, and James L. Cook, *Developing Strategists: Translating National Strategy into Theater Strategy* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2009), 23.

B. RESTRUCTURING ORGANIZATIONS FOR OPTIMAL EFFECT

As with all bureaucracies, there needs to be appropriate supervision from the leadership to enforce collaboration and ensure the command structure is better integrated into the formulation of the information estimate, as was outlined in Chapter II. The asymmetry of emerging areas of conflicts means a broader range of information gathering and processing, and as such requires a more engaged and involved command presence in the formulation of planning and strategy. The cycle of planning no longer works because staffs aren't operating in an iterative environment of chess against a "mirror image" enemy. Instead, as Arquilla and Ronfelt indicate in "Swarming," the game of "go" is a better rendering of modern conflict, which requires a more sophisticated understanding of the board.¹⁰⁶

Ironically, most working groups, internal staff meetings, and planning sessions are designed to gain clarity in the operating environment. Their shortcoming is they tend to operate with their own spheres of information or intelligence that drive them, and typically don't cross-pollenate, nor are they given incentive to do so without the expressed desire of a commander. Information and intelligence streamlining done through the Barber Pole is a means of guiding and tailoring military decision making, it is not meant to subsume the command decision or intuition innate in command itself. At a strategic level, there is already an understanding that the human domain is defined by numerous cross-cutting disciplines, but as subordinate units assume the implementation of the strategy, they also must create a corresponding structure to implement said strategy.¹⁰⁷ While this is true, it is not unique to the "nation building" mission. Foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), and counterinsurgency operations all rely heavily on the military's – specifically special operations forces – ability to bridge the gap between military force and diplomacy.

¹⁰⁶ John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *Swarming & the Future of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000).

¹⁰⁷ Charles Cleveland, lecture, Monterey, CA, September 6, 2013.

C. CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL INCENTIVES TO SUPPORT THE BARBER POLE

What makes the Barber Pole ideal for immediate enmeshing to existing methodology is that it is designed to maximize the utility of existing organizational assets, but streamlines and “flattens” those internal structures to gain maximal efficacy.¹⁰⁸ Rather than shunning those existing norms for a new model, the Barber Pole recognizes some inherent strengths in structured bureaucracy, one of which is that when they are flattened to incorporate an information system, the dissemination of that information is much simpler. In this context, “flattening” refers to the dissolution of institutional barriers between intelligence and information without violating existing legal restrictions. A commander must work to acculturate his subordinates towards commonly accepted informational estimates and reward them accordingly. This is not to say that intelligence and information systems should be integrated fully, but merely given structure to ensure they are mutually supporting and inclusive of each other.

Borrowing a page from organizational design theory, the horizontal distribution of ideas and information lends itself to the innovation and imagination of those processing said data. This innovation allows for the entire spectrum of operations, skills, and data and would then develop plans to best apply assets to operations according to their criticality or their importance. Most importantly, common operating pictures are developed through mutual adjustment as is the continual updates to the existing environment, meaning that all agencies learn, grow, and shift as a collective.¹⁰⁹ These advantages alone are an incentive, but because bureaucracies tend to resist changes, the advantage over the existing system should be reinforced from the leadership. Although this construct seems alien to the structured military planning environment, like many horizontally distributed agencies, having a detached, loosely affiliated core of collectors, developers, and interpreters of all given data gives significant flexibility to the

¹⁰⁸ One approach might be Galbraith’s model of incentives given the bureaucratic nature of military and government organizations, See Jay Galbraith, “The Star Model,” <http://www.jaygalbraith.com/images/pdfs/StarModel.pdf>, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Henry Mintzberg. *Organization design: fashion or fit?* (Boston, Mass: Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1981), 11.

organization itself, and allows for both immediate response and measured long-term planning.

The existing intelligence and information collection systems already exist, yet the civil information collection and development process is generally viewed as separate and unique from the intelligence and red information collection. Integration of these systems at every level serves to augment the targeting board with the civil perspective and a targeting process with a voting member based upon their understanding of the civil and white informational environment.

D. TAILORING THE BARBER POLE FOR MISSION SPECIFIC INFORMATION

At the operational level, especially as they exist in SOF, no single command structure is exactly the same, nor do they operate in the same manner. Cultural, institutional, and a multitude of other differences mandate that all commands from the TSOC down must adjust their operations to and procedures to meet the needs of the area of responsibility. This is no different from the needs of the conventional units that are regionally aligned and habitually work with set cultures and populations. The unconventional nature of SOF missions, and relationships with the population as the bedrock of much of what SOF is responsible for that makes the Barber Pole methodology uniquely suited. The mission sets also mean that the Barber Pole must be implemented in such a way that units implement the core themes without becoming wedded to a doctrine that doesn't meet the needs of the specific region in which they operate.

Despite legal considerations, there is a role for the interplay of information and intelligence in such a way that does not violate the principle separation of the processes for those respective disciplines. In actuality, maintaining the separation while incorporating the skills needed for the breadth of intelligence and information will likely yield a more complete and multifaceted shared informational environment as a result. The Barber Pole is designed to take an innovative look at populations and determine the degree of influence a given military operation might have on that population. Innovative thought relies on a mix of ideas, experiences, and skills to ensure broad comprehension

and depiction of information while adjusting with the population in real-time. This is in contrast with the trial and error-type process that seems to typify contemporary planning, wherein ideas and plans are executed, measured for their effect, and is then followed by an initiation of the process anew.

The key difference between these two methods is that one is designed to depict the environment and receptivity to a given influence in a population, the second is designed to direct selected operations across the spectrum and then measure those operations against the original estimate. While subtle, the difference is an important one. The information environment under the Barber Pole is more fluid and adjusts with the addition of information throughout the process. This means that the commonly understood environment matches the adjustments of the population as they happen, leading to a more dynamic means of planning and operating. The existing model is a cyclic one that relies on a recurring reassessment of separate intelligence and information nodes on an intermittent basis. This cycle of testing and reassessing is inefficient, slow, and generally yields poor results. At the tactical level, flexibility is easier to incorporate because there are fewer variables to contend with. However, because the tactical level is likely to have a greater degree of information granularity, the estimates provided at the tactical level are the foundational elements to shared informational environment. This makes the shared comprehension of information at the strategic level all the more important, because they will naturally be further removed from the primary sources at the tactical level, but the decisions made as a result will have broad reaching impact. Shared comprehension at the strategic level must incorporate the subordinate estimates, design strategy according to influence, erstwhile maintaining a constantly updated strategic informational assessment. This places considerable burden on the staffs to maintain, which will be addressed in the next section.

E. THE FUTURE OF THE BARBER POLE AND CONFLICT

In its current permutation, the Barber Pole is a guideline for commanders and staffs to adapt as appropriate to their commands. The intended outcomes remain the same: shared information across commands, disciplines, and agencies where appropriate,

the establishment of common understanding of the information environment, and to determine potential population influence and optimize the application of military forces appropriately. ARSOF 2022 envisions a more professional and dynamic intelligence structure, the Barber Pole builds on that vision to create a comprehensive information environment devoid of the institutional shortcomings.

SOF typically demand quick immersion into a population where a current and comprehensive study of that population may or may not be available. The Global SOF Network as envisioned by ARSOF 2022 seeks to rectify the issues that come with a cold start of relationships within a target population.¹¹⁰ The Barber Pole assists this process in two ways. First, the commonly shared understanding of a regional population within a TSOC provides an accurate portrayal of influence. Secondly, tactical SOF operations would have an integrated information construct supporting their operations. This, in turn, equates to the generation of a greater spectrum of operations now available at the tactical level, because operational command can forecast and provide supporting forces to meet the capability gaps at the team level.

Meeting the conceptual gaps between strategy and tactical operations have beguiled planners for centuries, but as the complexities of contemporary conflict have emerged, so has the need for understanding of the nature of conflict and where it occurs. The Barber Pole addresses only one part of the overall problem, other contributing factors like political and strategic dissonance, diplomatic and military incongruity, and training methodologies to match the need for the application of techniques within the Barber Pole need attention in order for the new methodology to reach full effect. Even though information is not the sole reason for the military's shortcomings in MOE development, the inculcation of comprehensive informational estimates and their determination of influence will result in multifaceted solutions to regional problems. The Barber Pole makes allowances for bureaucracies that tend to be insular and slow to change, and creates new efficiencies using minor structural changes and a redesigned informational

110 United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication. "ARSOF 2022," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (April-June 2013), 3-31.

construct. The potential and, in the case of JSOTF-P, demonstrated savings both in monetary and human capital alone gives credence to this methodology across the full spectrum of military operations.

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